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ABSTRACT

The provision of counseling services, especially for community college students in need of developmental education, will continue to be a task of major importance in the coming decade. However, if counselors are to be effective in helping these students, they must select, implement, and mesh their strategies with other college personnel within a framework of five essential, interacting elements. First, the focus and purpose of developmental education must be established and counseling strategies framed within the context of an agreed upon definition of developmental education. Second, agreement on the philosophical basis of student development theory should give meaning and coherence to a college's program of developmental education. Third, a clear definition of the target student clientele of such a program must be established and criteria for inclusion in such programs identified. Fourth, the entire resources of a college should constitute the support system for developmental education students. Fifth, programs, activities, and strategies can then be constructed to develop a counseling program which is responsive to student needs and clear in its educational and philosophical objectives. (HB)

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The Role of Counseling in Community College Developmental Programs: A Framework for Consideration

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In order to be effective in helping community college students in developmental education programs, those concerned with the role of counseling must select, implement and mesh their strategies with other college personnel on the basis of the interaction of five essential elements that constitute a framework. The author discusses each of these elements in the light of the key question that each one deals with.

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Although counseling is usually understood to have a key role in community college developmental education activities, problems remain as to how counseling will best contribute to that program. For example, in providing help to students counselors may choose to interpret and treat certain of the student problems they face primarily in their broader personal need rather than immediate academic weakness aspects and therefore face difficulties in working with instructional faculty. Also, counselors may protest that their work with students is non-quantifiable and non-measurable in the usual ways and as a result frustrate at least some of the administrative attempts toward accountability in developmental studies. Problems such as these need to be resolved in the light of the community college's total situation. However, the expertise that many counselors have as specialists in human behavior in such areas as assessment, diagnosis, treatment strategies, learning theory and process, organizational behavior, consultation, and applied research can be of immense benefit to a developmental program, if properly utilized. College leaders who want their programs to be educationally exciting (i.e. have program strength), sensitive to the human situation (student-oriented), and also institutionally significant (properly accountable) badly need this kind of help.

A counseling program appropriate to a community college developmental education program depends upon careful planning for its success. The argument made here is that this planning can best be carried out if guided by a framework represented by the interaction of five essential elements. The elements are: (1) focus or purpose in developmental education; (2) philosophical basis of student development

theory; (3) student clientele; (4) institutional system; and (5) programming, activities, strategies used (Figure 1). These elements call for confronting five matching questions: To accomplish what? For what reason? For whom? With what support? Doing what? If counseling strategies can be developed on the basis of an initial and continuing analysis of the effective interaction of such elements, then there will indeed be a program that meets immediate as well as long-term student needs, has in-house strength, provides guidelines for planning, evaluation and professional development activities, and is geared toward the achievement of long-term institutional goals.

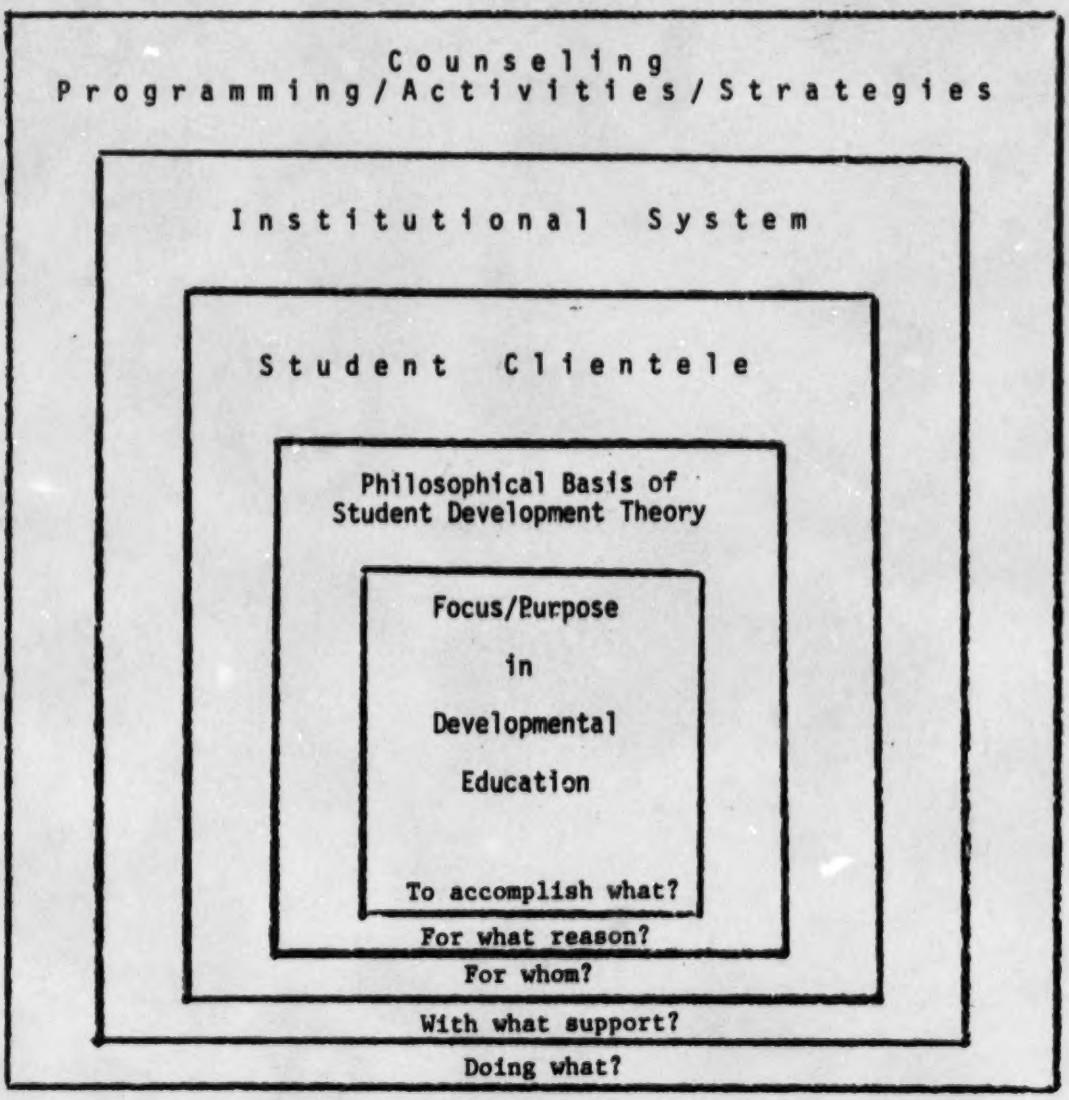
Three assumptions underlie this discussion: the significant role of the community college in America both now and in the generation ahead; the continued presence in community colleges, at least over the next decade, of large numbers of students unprepared for regular college tasks; and the importance of providing counseling help to the many types of community college students, but especially to students needing developmental education. An operational dilemma exists, however, in that on one level counseling is viewed as an essential function in the community college, but on another level this function remains unclear to many and its effectiveness doubted.

1. Focus/Purpose in Developmental Education....."To accomplish what?"

The first of the elements in the framework has to do with the nature of this problem area itself. Without a clear understanding of <u>what</u> the college is seeking to accomplish in its developmental program and just <u>how</u> it is going about it, the counseling strategies used will not succeed no matter how well-meaning they might be (Clowes, 1979). Counseling personnel, therefore, must appreciate

Figure 1

A Framework of Elements
Applicable to the Role of Counseling
in Community College Developmental Education



With special appreciation to Josef Albers for his painting, "Homage to the Square: Glow", used as the theme for the U. S. Education Department Official Opening, May 4-9, 1980, and also on the U. S. postage stamp.

the larger issues involved in their community college's commitment and thus be able to contribute in a major way to their college's success as well as their students' success. On the other hand if the college does not yet have the kind of focus or purpose in its developmental program that has been clearly thought through and has strong faculty/staff support, counselors may help their colleagues to meet this need.

Developmental education is generally considered as a college's major effort in the form of programs and services to help those admitted students who are inadequately prepared for college-level study. Yet this whole effort remains controversial. The questions being debated are familiar ones. Should students be admitted who do not show evidence of "proper" knowledge and skill for "college" level work. Should not costly college help remain targeted on improvement in the "3 Rs," the basic skills requisite for "college level" study? What kinds of activities are appropriate for working with such students in a college situation, and who are the people within the college who should be involved? How should developmental education be evaluated? External and internal pressures, research findings, and institutional experience and attitudes all bear heavily on the answers that colleges find for such questions.

The terminology used illustrates this controversy and points to how those in the college have thought through their purposes. Is "remedial education" the main approach, describing activities both inside and outside the classroom that are aimed primarily at correcting academic deficiencies? Or, as in many places, has the term "developmental education" or "developmental studies" become preferred reflecting a concern for the gaining of personal strengths as well as the correction of weaknesses? Both approaches can be used by colleges

seeking to help students either in a coordinated way without altering the curriculum, or by devising a separate curricular program and/or set of services. Where terms like "compensatory education," "basic skills" and "academic foundation" are used, often in connection with the developmental idea, counselors need to understand the subtleties of approach that may be intended (Clowes, 1980; Richardson, Martens and Fisk, 1981; Roueche and Snow, 1977). Since this discussion analyzes the way counseling strategies can best contribute to a developmental program in the community college, further references assume some aspect of developmental education as the focus or purpose selected.

The problem of poorly-prepared students is of course a central one in almost all colleges as well as in the open door community colleges. Some debatable evidence exists that there is a downward trend in college students' academic aptitude, postulated by College Board reports of a slide in SAT scores for almost a generation--average score drop from 1963-1980, Verbal 478-424 and Math 506-466 (Washington Post, 1981). The fact that such a trend has accompanied a downward trend in illiteracy as officially reported has not escaped notice. In a study by Virginia's State Council of Higher Education the ironic point is made that "competency appears to be declining with illiteracy" (SCHEV, 1981, p.2). An altered view may be needed of what literacy really is. Leaders of the Literacy Development in the Community College project staff cite this need to broaden our meaning of literacy, from one of minimum competence in written language based on "implicit notions about the language that the average adult in our society should read" to a definition instead that involves oral as well as written language, the way the language is processed, the context in which it is used, and the functions of this use regarding both individual and societal

goals (Richardson, Martens and Fish, 1981, p. 7).

Such a situational approach to literacy which includes environment and individual functioning along with language and processing can be meshed with other lines of research and conceptualizing on adult functional competence. Academic skill deficiences of college-going students are part of a picture of adult coping skill deficiency particularly in relation to adult basic tasks (Northcutt et al., 1975; Cross, 1981; Chickering and Associates, 1981), thus lending credibility to a developmental rather than solely remedial emphasis in college programs of help.

Although community colleges with open door policies have the largest developmental studies enrollments from both an absolute number and a percentage (10% to 50%) standpoint, four-year colleges are more and more confronting similar problems. This is particularly true of urban four-year public colleges, small church colleges, and predominantly black colleges, many of which are establishing developmental studies programs or giving new attention to long-standing programs which they have had. Like it or not, students inadequately prepared for college work are "there." Counselors are called upon to join with others in responding positively and effectively to the needs of these students. To do so the strategies they use must be clearly aligned with the college's central focus in its developmental program.

2. Philosophical Basis of Student Development Theory....."For What Reason?"

A whole body of literature has arisen in the last decade pointing to the potential for significant educational change residing in the student development movement (Miller and Prince, 1976; Delworth and Hanson, 1980; Rodgers and Widick, 1980; Chickering and Associates, 1981). Particularly important gains could occur

with developmental education students as a result of college practices consciously oriented to student development thinking (Creamer and Clowes, 1979; Creamer, 1980).

A developmental program presumes both formal and informal help to students in aspects broader than basic skills improvement, for example in developing self-confidence along with academic competence. The presumptions are obviously not new ones, though the emphases and their application may be, that personal growth and educational achievement have inseparable linkages, that the primary goal of the college should be the "intentional developmental change in students throughout the life cycle" (Chickering et Assoc., 1981, p.2), and that all instructors and staff members may be expected to be equally concerned with patterns of adult development that includes affective as well as cognitive growth factors.

Such a focusing on the philosophy of student development and particularly the concept that increased academic achievement is directly related to personal growth (and vice versa) needs to undergird the entire body of developmental activities including the role of counseling. The framework that first emphasized the primary established purpose of the college's developmental program necessarily includes as a second key element this philosophical basis of student development (the program's "raison d'ētre) that gives meaning and coherance to the college's efforts and that answers the question, "For what reason". The counselor's contribution at this point can be an immense one. His or her values, training, expectations, and counseling strategies used all suggest this. More so perhaps, but not necessarily, than in all other disciplines and professional units within the college, those who represent the counseling function will design their activities on the basis of guidelines from student development philosophy.

Many different problems and weaknesses interfere with student success in basic skills. These then become the test of how the college can help. A consensus is emerging that one of the most important ways to help the developmental student is to help overcome the expectation of failure, the low concept of self, and the aimlessness in life and career goals. The developmental education student is no stranger to failure. More frequently the student is failure's constant companion and has a severe "victim mentality" problem. As close as counselors should be to such personal problem-solving, they hold no jurisdictional rights over what the college does in dealing with these difficulties. People throughout the college can help to alleviate these problems and must be respected in their ability to do so, especially where the principle is asserted that academic and personal development is one. Indeed counselors do well to recognize the subtle but effective role (perhaps even greater one) that instructors and other students have in furthering affective growth. The philosophical premises of student development need to be used to test practice continually. A note of caution has been sounded regarding barriers to student self-sufficiency. Well-intentioned helpers can all too easily become guilty of inducing what has been called "learned helplessness"(Seligman, 1975; Maier and Solomon, 1969; Roueche, Mink and Armes, 1981). In dealing with this problem Robert and Kay Stensrud chose to entitle their article, "Counseling may be hazardous to your health: How we teach people to feel powerless" (Stensrud and Stensrud, 1981). The student's positive alternative to learned helplessness is achievement of the personal power to be finally responsible for his or her growth. Recently there has been increased interest in developing internality as indicated by a locus of control measure.

Theorizing from Rotter's concept of "control expectancy," emphasizing the importance of students perceiving that they control at least partly their learning situation themselves, Roueche and Mink designed and evaluated an individual, learner-oriented instructional system incorporating a composite counseling strategy, and demonstrated significant movement of students from external to internal motivation (Rotter, 1966; Roueche and Mink, 1976a; Roueche and Mink, 1976b). Obviously instructors, counselors and administrators all must mesh their activities for such gains to be realized.

A heartening aspect of the current attention to student development theory and practice is the satisfying way in which the various professional and institutional activities in developmental education can and do cohere under the rubric of this philosophical position. We have long needed an undergirding philosophy that has creditable, intellectual respectability within academe, and is personally motivating.

Fenske has looked at the secularizing changes in American higher education over three and a half centuries and noted the disappearance of religious values as the college's source of unity that integrated all participants and activities. He suggests that "only in a setting in which an absolute unifying principle permeates all of the life and aims of a college, can student services with its concern for the whole person become a full partner in the academic enterprise" (Fenski, 1981, p. 5-6).

It may be that student development theory, unlike other movements, causes, and fads that come and go, may give meaning to the work of the college for the rest of the century and affect greatly the college's mission, public support, faculty/staff morale, and student response. On the other hand the next decade may witness its demise as another "noble experiment," especially where so much

confusion and distrust abound over the applicability of the concepts and the lack of needed skill of professional personnel. Counselors have a major stake in the outcome.

3. Student Clientele....."For whom?"

The nature of the student group, the third element in the framework, must remain the focus for programming as it traditionally has been, except for two important reservations. First, in order to understand the group we are dealing with, we readily make use of nationally or regionally-collected data on students. Yet each college bears such uniqueness that local college information on the student group has priority over data from the larger studies. Secondly, when the counselor moves to provide professional help data on students cannot take the place of information on the individual student. The same point can be made, in a sense, in terms of designing a program of counseling strategies. Harmon and Baron's model for counseling services endeavors "to focus all goals, objectives and stategies on the ultimate target, the student" (1982, p. 291).

The group of students in developmental education can be defined at a first level in academic respects--on the basis of their perceived inability to handle successfully the college's course expectations unless some improvement takes place. Since inadequacy in basic skills--primarily reading, writing and mathematics--is the usual reason for the college to have a developmental program, just how the college determines this "inadequacy" becomes the critical determining factor as to who the students are who are selected. Placement criteria differ greatly. Colleges use such varied criteria as: below an identified point on a national standarized test such as the 10th grade reading level on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test; below 2.0 on the high school grade point average ("C" average); below predetermined cut-off scores on such state standardized

examinations as the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test; below a defined point on subject field tests or locally-devised tests in English and Math; and even below a composite score point where poor performance expectations and low self-image are seen as related and are measured. Generally these criteria are both exclusive and inclusive determiners, the exclusion of students from being permitted to enroll in one of the regular curricula or particular courses within them, and as a result the inclusion of students on an invitational basis into a particular developmental program of the college.

At another level students identified and classified by these criteria are described in social, personality and personal need aspects. A report from the FIPSE-sponsored National Project II referred to developmental students as the traditionally-excluded segments of society--the poor, the ethnic minority, the older, the first generation college students, and the students with lower high school averages (1977). There are acute socio-political as well as educational implications of programming for such groups.

Cross has contributed useful information and to an extent correctives to these judgments. She has identified a group of students new to higher education as a result of open admission college policies and defined this group as the "New Students", those who come from the lowest third of high school graduates as indicated by traditional tests of academic achievement (1971).. Clearly many students in developmental programs will come from this New Student group. However, because of the mistaken perception that minority group students monopolize this inadequately-prepared group of "New Students", she later pointed out that although Black students are "overrepresented", they are still a minority. To the surprise of many, the "New Student" group is more a white, blue-collar one

than a minority group one (1976). Not surprisingly a majority of the group are first generation college students.

One North Carolina community college described its developmental studies group as: (1) they see their problems as vocational, sex and marriage, personal/psychological; (2) they are less able than regular college students to use standard English to express feelings, experiences, objectives; (3) they are self-defensive, disbelieving, easily disorganized under stress to conform, pessimistic regarding their occupational future, compliant before authority, lacking self-understanding, awkward in unfamiliar social situations, overly influenced by others' opinions and reactions, uncertain in decision-making, lacking self-direction, and restricted in outlook (Garber, 1973). From such a comprehensive description all personnel in this college would be expected to understand their students' need for help, healing and growth, and to support a total team approach in which counselors have a key role.

The presence of many discreet but overlapping categories of students who need basic skill help makes it clear that a systematic description of the student group can easily become superficial, and can frustrate the attempt to plan a focused program of counseling strategies utilizing the resources of the whole college.

4. Institutional System....."With what support?"

The entire college's resources, of which the counseling program is a part, needs to be thought of as constituting the support system for developmental education students, if student development goals are to be realized.

There is a temptation, one to be resisted, for community college counselors to "go it alone" in seeking to meet student needs. But counselors have also been left to work apart and alone, outside the academic mainstream, with low faculty

acceptance, and with tenuous institutional support (Brown, 1972). Nevertheless it is essential that counselors plan from the very beginning of their work with developmental education students to mesh their strategies with those of the instructional faculty, professional and classified staff personnel, students, community members--in fact all who are able to work together as a team. The counseling strategies must fit smoothly into the functioning of what is a system. In doing so they will enhance the functioning of different units in the system and in turn see the increased effectiveness of the counseling program.

Four considerations justify a heavy counseling commitment to the utilization of total system resources:

1. The community college is a special kind of institution geared to the development of people which faculty and staff choose to join and in doing so need to become fully involved in helping the college achieve its goals with students.

2. Counseling is naturally committed to student development philosophy; to recognize holistic personal development linking academic success with success in developmental life tasks; and to understand that for counseling to help the student achieve this success, help is needed from across the whole college.

3. Developmental problems are often complex (academic, personal and social) and so call for varied types of help within the college.

4. The large numbers of developmental students needing help preclude the use of traditional college practices, such as 1-1 counseling. Instead they call for the strengthening of an integrated system in which all play multiple roles.

As college personnel have sought to "team up" toward the accomplishment of college purposes they have faced various types of hurdles: the degree of philosophical commitment; the processes or methods used; the magnitude of the cooperative tasks they deal with; the nature of the relationship of the different parties involved; and the type of reckoning or evaluation used for determining

whether or not the efforts were worthwhile. These factors are categorized in Figure 2, postulating two kinds of settings--those college situations that resist team involvement ("Ineffective or Not Carried Out") and those situations that have seen team involvement readily utilized ("Effective and Readily Employed").

As indicated counseling leaders have a high stake in the effective utilization of total college resources operating as an institutional system, in order that developmental education students will be able to succeed. In addition a strong argument can be made that the higher the level of cooperative activity, the higher will be the credibility that counseling has as a function within the college.

5. Programming, Activities, Strategies..... ....."Doing what?"

The process of designing a counseling program by analyzing the implications of elements in this framework becomes complete (except for evaluation) when all appropriate programs, activities and strategies are organized and then become operational. This stage, answering the "Doing what?" question, is not truly a succession in a hierarchical sense, in that all previous elements are to be adequately studied before programming should begin, but rather the stage relates and continues to relate to the other elements of the framework in an interactive sense. The purpose of it all and important aspects of student development philosophy (Elements 1 and 2) will confront the practitioner at times of pause and confront the counseling staff on every formal review occasion. Students who change--demographically and within themselves--alter the plan (Element 3). Environmental happenings, opportunities, hindrances will find response in how the counseling staff modifies the patterns of cooperative activity (Element 4).

The actual process of building the program benefits from models of the last decade (Morrill and Hurst, 1971; Brown, 1972; Drum and Figler, 1973; Banning and Kaiser, 1974; Conyne and Clack, 1975; Harmon and Baron, 1982). In the student-

UTILIZATION OF SYSTEM RESOURCES
IN DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENT SITUATIONS JUSTIFYING TEAM INVOLVEMENT

	Where Ineffective, or Not Carried out	Where Effective and Readily Carried Out
Philosophical Commitment	Members oppose: College-wide activity in developmental education. The pressure for instructional support given other than straight academic help	Members support: The college's humanistic approach. The priority given to college personnel working together as a community to meet student needs.
Process	Referral is complex or difficult. Making arrangements is bothersome. Too much follow-through is expected. There is difficulty in identifying the type of help needed.	Effective college-wide help to students is facilitated by: Administrative support Cooperative planning that works out problems in advance. High-level of activity that gets "the path greased by usage".
Magnitude	The number of needed transactions makes college-wide activity seem an overwhelming burden.	The large number of student situations mandates a team approach. If college programs are to work, many simply must join in to help and will.
Nature of Relationship	College-wide relationships are poorly developed, characterized by jurisdictional defensiveness, frictions, sensitivities. Responses to referrals are impersonal, distant, bureaucratic, or "Not my job to help," "I can't do that." Help provided is ad hoc, unplanned Counselors tend to be isolated, tolerated	Responses to referrals are warm and helpful. System has been made personal. Reactions are favorable to counseling as an important part of the system. College personnel sense their integration and strength.
Evaluation	Little analysis is made of goal accomplishment.	Effort is made to determine student achievement resulting from team effort.

focused model proposed by Harmon and Baron, strategies that can be utilized are suggested. The authors have organized these strategies in reference to the purposes of intervening (i.e., to satisfy crisis, remediation, or development purposes), according to three levels of intervention (the student, all who regularly interact with the student, and environmental factors), and the goals of intervention. Strategies then suggested include many different forms of individual help; a variety of group work techniques; workshops; case-centered consultation; course work; all of these along with traditional institutional activities such as committee work.

Those strategies that are planned that call for the involvement of other student services professionals to meet such student needs as financial aid, career planning and health can benefit from the counseling training of those professionals. With this help students brought together in groups either involuntarily such as in financial aid record-keeping sessions or voluntarily such as in career decision-making sessions can grow in such areas as self-confidence, time and study skills, increased control of themselves, and the mature use of their time and energy as they tackle academic tasks.

Some strategies that are planned involve the counselor directly with instructional faculty where it is hoped that the counselor's previous successful experiences will assure a successful team effort. For example, faculty advising illustrates the potential for effective team work and will build on a mutually-satisfying training activity. There are always, as well, the informal interactions, such as discussion over coffee of ways to motivate the student and to plan for his/her success (perhaps by "engineering" a winning experience for the student). These usually pay high dividends.

Summary

In order to be effective in helping community college students in develop-

mental education programs, those concerned with the role of counseling must select, implement and mesh their strategies with other college personnel on the basis of the interaction of five essential elements that constitute a framework. Each of these elements is complemented by a matching question that provides help (and urgency) to those planning the best counseling program possible. These elements with accompanying questions are:(1) focus or purpose in developmental education (To accomplish what?); (2) philosophical basis of student development theory (For what reason?); (3) student clientele (For whom?); (4) institutional system (With what support?); (5) programming, activities, strategies used (Doing what?). The framework does not actually represent a hierarchical schema, in which the fifth element is really a final stage in a sequence, completed only as all previous elements are adequately dealt with. Rather the framework is more accurately an interactive one in which all elements continually affect the development and remodeling of the kind of counseling program that will best help community college developmental education students to succeed.

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